

The Old Friend and the New



ANOTHER year has found us just as we were getting comfortably used to the idea that summer had really gone.

Busy people never have time to dwell very much on the passing of the seasons.

The days are so full of tasks and Father Time is always catching up and getting ahead of us in spite of his advanced age.

It is always the same old story! Spring surprises us with its blossoms and its bursting brooks and then summer has come and gone before we know it.

Very few of us stop to think that this swift passage of time in its passing indicates that we are really living rather than idling through life.

It is only when the days hang upon our hands that we know how blessed are those other times when we have to make lists of the many things we have to do and get up early mornings to begin them.

Of course we are likely to complain that we get so little done, especially at this time, when the calendars tell us that another 365 days have become a part of yesterday's 7,000 years.

We look back regretfully and realize that we have so little to record in the way of achievement, beyond the mere act of living from day to day and from week to week.

But living in the right spirit, striving, if not always accomplishing and completing the tasks we set ourselves, is nothing to regret.

It comes near to that simple life that sounds so grand and inspiring when it is lived in the woods, but which is quite as fine when lived in a big city.

There is no doubt that when we try to set up standards of happiness and contentment and peace at the close of a year that has had its share of sunshine and its stretches of shade, that it is impossible to put wealth, or fame, or success, personal popularity, beauty or even health itself forward as the great, good thing that makes life worth living.

The thing that counts is the ability and the desire to feel an interest in things, in events and persons—in the game of life itself.

All the other blessings fall unless that interest remains. It is very close to health for it is a part of youth, of vitality, of life.

It has become the general practice to speed the departure of the old year with every indication of rejoicing, welcoming in the new with acclaim and expressions of satisfaction.

It is natural and wholesome to look forward, but those of us who wish to include the brick of gratitude in the building of our characters should learn to omit our complaints of the luck the old year has brought us.

In truth, the new year will be to a great extent like the old—what we make it and how we take it.

Things will happen in accordance with the same laws that guide this big earth of which we are a small part.

So we can greet 1908 in a calm and happy manner, rather than with any manifestations of frenzied joy at its coming, and let us have the good manners to speed our parting guest, 1907, politely.

With all his faults we know him for what he was and the new year is as yet a stranger to us.

We can hope and believe that all good things will come with him, but let us avoid the hackneyed congratulation on the passing of a twelve-month that probably treated us better than we deserved.

The dawning of another January is invariably the time for what are called "good resolutions," which translate themselves into rash promises, usually broken before the new year is well under way.

That was the old-fashioned way of expressing an inclination to reform one's bad habits and people kept on from youth to old age making these good resolutions every 31st of December, finding themselves each year further from perfection than ever.

Good resolutions are not so prevalent, or at least not so holy as they used to be at this time.

They have become popular material for the comic papers and everybody knows what a joke they are.

Nevertheless, the close of a year is a capital time for a look back, a retrospect in which we can see the faults that are on the mend with us, or the ones that have persevered and grown stronger.

Maybe some new tendency has sprung up which does not promise well.

At all events if we are able to get a new view of our characters as though a searchlight had been thrown

in on our souls, we are in a fair way to improve.

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So if your look back shows you mistakes and errors and misbeliefs, be glad that the New Year gives you a clean slate to try for the right road and the true goal.

Be thankful for the mental perspective when you see it with clear sight—with new true eyes.

There is no need of making resolutions, for right seeing means right thinking and right thinking is the path to right living.

Perhaps your faults are those mean little ones which you would like to exchange in a bunch for one noble sin, but there are no exchanges of that sort or we should all be noble sinners.

The petty faults are the thorns that cluster round some of the finest roses in life's big garden, crowding, jarring, overtopping one another in their eagerness to get to the light.

Maybe the old year has been a good friend in some special instances that you can recall.

Perhaps it brought you back with a short, sharp shock from a too arrogant happiness or an overconfident success.

Be glad of that jar, even though it kept you stirred up for awhile.

Perhaps the past 12 months have healed some breach or brought some ship home, the white sails of which you have been watching wistfully for months or years far out at sea.

Be glad of that.

Perhaps some millstone has fallen from you and you stand free at last on the great highway with long, manmade arms reached out to the sky.

Be glad!

Or peace has settled on a troubled ocean and you can greet the sunrise with a smile and a prayer of thankfulness for another day.

Maybe there is a cradle in one corner of your home this New Year's eve with a most important guest cuddled in down blankets and rose-leaf palms upturned for your kisses.

No need to tell you to be glad.

Or success has come to crown some effort at which you have toiled rather wearily, hardly daring to hope.

Or if it has been withheld, be glad that you have nevertheless tried. It will all come to you some day.

The old year has taught us lessons. Let us profit by them and enter into the new armed with experience rather than plunge into it as though it were a rose garden.

It is quite as full of danger and conflict and clouds as the old friend that is going.

Let us wish it will have even as much sunshine and gladness and joy.

We can meet it with splendid hope and lively faith—for those two qualities are what make our dreams come true.

Let us cherish a few good hopes that it may bring us the things we stand in need of—health, happiness, good friends, success, joy and the clear vision that will teach us to discern the false from the true.

May it leave us our beliefs and our ideals.

Teach us to love more and to hate not at all.

To be content with the blessings that we have.

To cultivate sweetness and good nature rather than exclusiveness.

To meet the world with a smile.

To stifle criticism of things and people.

Never to make little of our own.

THE POOR OLD YEAR.

By Clifford Kane Stout.

Good-by, Old Year, your mission ends. With midnight chimes and all is done: The records writ with joy or less.

The deeds fulfilled and gaudions won Are hung as trophies round thy rime. And thou art named with olden time.

Forevermore, oh, fateful past, That saw so much no law can change; Beginning and the end of things That were to be, the new and strange.

The old and worn and bloom and blight, Passed to the dark or born to light.

And, oh, for some happy year, Sweet portion come when grief had set: Old friends' clasped hands and strangers met.

And sunshine fell so glad and free On buoyant youth, and smiles were fair, And laughter bantered pain and care.

Some tears must fall in every year; Sweet portion come when grief had set: A badge of mourning on the heart.

Of some whose love could not forget, And hopefully, without dismay, They covered friends of yesterday.

Good-by, Old Year, we regret the New; When we recall your gifts and cost: May then a double portion show Thy favors won o'er which was lost.

Good-by! A hand at parting; then A benediction and amen.

—Cincinnati Enquirer.

THE NEW-BORN YEAR.

YESTERNIGHT the year lay dying?

By his lowly couch we met
Bringing ivy-leaves, and trying
Some with smiles and some with sighing
To remember—or forget

Now the nursing year is waking
And we gaze into his eyes
Heedless of his sure forsaking,
In his cradle he is taking
Gifts from earth and sea and skies.

Dawn of gold and sunset gleaming,
April eve and Junetide morn
Things of truth and not of seeming,
These have glorified his dreaming.
He the heir, the newly born.

In his tiny grasp he treasures
Riches that may soon be ours—
Sunlight gold in brimming measures,
Meadow fragrances and pleasures,
Honeyed wine distilled of flowers.

Soon the child will frolic lightly
O'er his father's grass-green grave,
Day shall be his playmate brightly,
And his sleep be sweetened nightly
By the songs of wind and wave.

ARTHUR L. SALMON

New Year Irresolutions

By HELEN ROWLAND

The Widow Discusses Them With the Bachelor.



I SNT it hard, said the widow, glancing ruefully at the holly-wreathed clock on the mantel-piece, to know where to begin reforming yourself?

"Great heavens!" exclaimed the bachelor, "you are not going to do anything like that, are you?"

The widow pointed solemnly to the hands of the clock, which indicated 11:30, and then to the calendar, on which hung one fluttering leaf marked December 31.

"It is time," she sighed, "to begin mental house-cleaning; to sweep out our collection of last year's follies and dust off our petty sins and fling away our old vices and—"

"That's the trouble!" broke in the bachelor. "It's so hard to know just what to throw away and what to keep. Making New Year's resolutions is like doing the spring house-cleaning or clearing out a drawer full of old letters and sentimental rubbish. You know that there are lots of things you ought to get rid of, and that are just in the way, and that you would be better off without, but the minute you make up your mind to part with anything, even a tiny, insignificant vice, it suddenly becomes so dear and attractive that you repent and begin to take a new interest in it. The only time I ever had to be taken home in a cab was the day after I promised to sign the pledge," and the bachelor sighed reminiscently.

"And the only time I ever over-drew my bank account," declared the widow, "was the day after I had resolved to economize. I suppose," she added pensively, "that the best way to begin would be to pick out the worst vice and discard that."

"And that will leave heaps of room for the others and for a lot of new little sins, beside, won't it?" agreed the bachelor cheerfully. "Well," he added philosophically, "I'll give up murder."

"What!" the widow started.

"Don't you want me to?" asked the bachelor plaintively, rubbing his bald spot. "Or perhaps I might resolve not to commit highway robbery any more or to stop forging or—"

"All of which is so easy!" broke in the widow sarcastically.

"There'd be some glory and some reason in giving up a big vice," sighed the bachelor, "if a fellow had one. But the trouble is that most of us men haven't any big criminal tendencies, merely a heap of little follies and weaknesses that there isn't any particular virtue in sacrificing or any particular harm in keeping."

"And which you always do keep, in spite of all your New Year's vows," remarked the widow ironically.

"Hah!" The bachelor laughed cynically. "It's our New Year's vows that help us to keep 'em. The very fact that a fellow has sworn to forego anything, whether it's a habit or a girl, makes it more attractive. I've thrown away a whole box of cigars with the finest intentions in the world and then gotten up in the middle of the night to fish the pieces out of the waste basket. And that midnight smoke was

the sweetest I ever had. It was sweeter than the apples I stole when I was a kid and the kisses I stole when—"

"If you came here to dilate on the joys of sin, Mr. Travers," began the widow coldly.

"And," proceeded the bachelor, "I've made up my mind to stop flirting with a girl, because I found out that she was beginning to—to—"

"I understand," interrupted the widow sympathetically.

"And, by Jove!" finished the bachelor, "I had to restrain myself to keep from going back and proposing to her!"

"How lucky you did!" commented the widow wistfully.

"But I wouldn't have," explained the bachelor ruefully, "if the girl had restrained herself."

"Nevertheless," repeated the widow, "it was lucky—for the girl."

"Which girl?" asked the bachelor. "The girl I broke off with or the girl that came afterward?"

"I suppose," mused the widow ignoring the levity and leaning over to arrange a bunch of violets at her belt, "that is why it is so difficult for a man to keep a promise or a vow—even a marriage vow."

"Oh, I don't know." The bachelor leaned back and regarded the widow's coronet braided through the smoke of his cigar. "It isn't the marriage vows that are so difficult to keep. It's the fool vows a man makes before marriage and the fool promises he makes afterward that he stumbles over and falls down on."

The marriage vows are so big and vague that you can get all around them without actually breaking them, but if they should interpolate concrete questions into the service such as, 'Do you, William, promise not to growl at the coffee?—'

"Or, 'Do you, Mary, promise never to put a dab of powder on your nose again?'" broke in the widow.

"Nor to look twice at your pretty stenographer," continued the bachelor.

"Nor to lie about your age, or your foot or your waist measure."

"Nor to juggle with the truth whenever you stay out after half-past ten."

"Nor to listen to things that—that anybody—except your husband may say to you in the conservatory—oh, I see how it feels!" finished the widow with a sympathetic little shudder.

"And yet," reflected the bachelor, "a woman is always exacting vows and promises from the man she loves, always putting up bars—for him to jump over; when if she would only leave him alone he would be perfectly contented to stay within bounds and graze in his own pasture. A man hates being pinned down; but a woman doesn't want anything around that she can't pin down, from her belt and her theories to her hat and her husband."

"Well," protested the widow studying the toe of her slipper, "it is a satisfaction to know you've got your husband fastened on straight by his promises and held in place by his own vows and that he loves you enough to—"

"Usually," interrupted the bachelor, "a man loves you in inverse ratio to

his protestations. The lover who promises all things without reserve is too often like the fellow who doesn't question the hotel bill nor ask the price of the wine, because he doesn't intend to pay it anyway. The fellow who is prodigal with his vows and promises and poetry is generally the one to whom such things mean nothing and, being of no value, can be flung about generously to every girl he meets. The firm with the biggest front office is likely to be the one with the smallest deposit in the safe. The man who swears off loud-est on New Year's is usually the one they have to carry home the morning after. And the chap who promises a girl a life of roses is the one who will let her pick all the thorns off for herself."

"Perhaps," sighed the widow, chewing the stem of a violet thoughtfully, "the best way to cure a man of a taste for anything, after all, is to let him have too much of it instead of making him swear off. If you want him to hate the smell of a pipe insist on his smoking all the time. If you want him to sign the temperance pledge, serve him wine with every course. If you want him to hate a woman, invite her to meet him every time he calls, and tell him how 'suitable' she would be."

"And if you want him to love you," finished the bachelor, "don't ask him to swear it, but tell him that he really ought not to. The best way to manage a donkey—human or otherwise—is to turn his head in the wrong direction and he'll back in the right one."

"Then," said the widow decisively, "we ought to begin the New Year by making some irresolutions."

"Some—what?"

"Vows that we won't stop doing the things we ought not to do," explained the widow.

"All right," agreed the bachelor thoughtfully, "I'll make an irresolution to go on making love to you as much as I like."

"You mean, as much as I like, Mr. Travers," corrected the widow severely.

"How much do you like?" asked the bachelor, leaning over to look into the widow's eyes.

The widow kicked the corner of the rug tentatively.

"I like—all but the proposing," she said slowly. "You really ought to stop that—"

"I'm going to stop it—to-night."

The widow looked up in alarm.

"Oh, you don't have to commence keeping your resolutions until tomorrow morning," she said quickly.

"And are you going to stop refusing me—to-night?" continued the bachelor firmly.

The widow studied the corner of the rug with great concern.

"And," went on the bachelor, taking something from his pocket and toying with it thoughtfully, "you are going to put on this ring"—he leaned over, caught the widow's hand and slipped the glittering thing on her third finger. "Now," he began, "you are going to say that you will—"

The widow sprang up suddenly.

"Oh, don't, don't, don't!" she cried. "In a moment we'll be making promises!"

"We don't need to," said the bachelor, leaning back nonchalantly, "we can begin by making—arrangements. Would you prefer to live in town or at Tuxedo? And do you think Europe or Bermuda the best place for the—"

"Bermuda, by all means," broke in the widow, "and I wish you'd have that hideous portico taken off your town house, Billy, and—"

But the rest of her words were smothered in the bachelor's coat lapel—and something else.

"Then you do mean to marry me, after all!" cried the bachelor triumphantly.

The widow gasped for breath and patted her hair anxiously.

"I meant to marry you all the time," she cried, "but I never thought you were really in earnest and—"

"Methinks," quoted the bachelor happily, "that neither of us did protest too much! We haven't made any promises, you know."

"Not one," rejoined the widow promptly, "as to my flirting."

"Nor as to my clubs."

"Nor as to my relatives."

"Nor my cigars."

"And we won't make any vows," cried the widow, "except marriage vows."

"And New Year's irresolutions," added the bachelor.

"Listen!" cried the widow softly, with her fingers on her lips.

A peal of a thousand silver bells rang out on the midnight air.

"The chimes!" exclaimed the widow. "They're full of promises."

"I thought it sounded like a wedding bell," said the bachelor, disappointedly.

"Maybe," said the widow, "it was only Love—ringing off."—Los Angeles Times.

New Year's Calls.

The custom of visiting and sending presents and cards on New Year's day is recorded almost as far back as history goes. The practice of using visiting cards can be traced back for thousands of years by the Chinese. Their New Year's visiting cards are curious. Each one sets forth not only the name, but all the titles of its owner, and, as all Chinamen who have any social position at all have about a dozen, it makes the list quite appalling. These cards are made of silk or else of fine paper backed with silk and are so large that they have to be rolled up to be carried conveniently. They are, indeed, so valuable that they are returned to their owners.

Little Jeffrey's New Year Luck



LITTLE Jeffrey was an orphan lad whose father was killed in a railroad accident when Jeffrey was a tiny baby in his mother's arms. And the mother had been made so ill by the sudden death of little Jeffrey's father that she was no longer able to care for her baby and a few months later she went to join the father and baby Jeffrey was left all alone in the world.

Then friendly neighbors who had too many babies of their own to find room for this little fatherless and motherless boy had him taken to an orphan asylum and he grew up with 50 other boys and girls who had no mother or father.

When Alice Lane came to the home she was eight years old. Her mother and father had died within a few weeks of one another and it was a sad-eyed little girl who crept about the big rooms of the home. Little Jeffrey had a big heart and he felt very sorry for Alice.

On the third day after her arrival he walked up to her and planting himself in front of her he said:

"Alice Lane, why do you cry so much? Why don't you play?"

He was such a funny, freckle-faced little fellow that Alice smiled a faint little smile. It was the first one since her mother's death. Then the tears came again and she sobbed:

"I want mamma, Jeffrey. I want papa, too, and my own home. This is big and lonesome and they don't love you like mamma and papa."

From that time on Alice and Jeffrey were the best of friends. He was such a cheerful little fellow and often so droll that many times Alice laughed in spite of herself.

But when Alice began to talk much of her home and her mamma and papa he began to wish for one, too. The wish grew and grew until at last he felt that there was nothing in the world that he wanted except a mother and a father and a home. When Christmas time came and the children wrote their wishes on a piece of paper one of the house mothers read in Jeffrey's: "Ples, I don't want nothing but a father and a mother and a home with flowers in the window."

From time to time children were taken from the orphan's home by people who had no children of their own. The house mother hoped so much that little Jeffrey would be chosen and his wish granted. But the people who came passed by the eager little fellow who eyed each newcomer hopefully.

So Christmas day passed and Jeffrey received sweetmeats and warm clothing and an iron engine, but not the father and mother and home.

He cried himself to sleep that night and Alice had to turn comforter for the next few days.

"Mamma always said New Year's was the lucky day and maybe you'll get them then. And if you don't, then you will some other time, 'cause Mother Burns said she'd try."

On New Year's morning Jeffrey was awake early, and his first thought was:

"Maybe the mother'll come to-day."

A few hours later a very pretty woman dressed in velvet and furs followed by a tall man came to the home. Little Jeffrey looked up hopefully. But the woman seemed not to see the boys for her eyes were scanning the faces of the little girls. When she came to Alice she started:

"That's the one, Jerome," she said eagerly. "The same gentle face and blue eyes and golden hair. We must have her. It will seem like having our little Alice back again!"

When she learned the name of the little girl she had chosen she was still more interested.

"You would like to go home with me, dear, wouldn't you?" she asked Alice.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Alice, "but I couldn't go without Jeffrey, 'cause he's been my friend and he wants a father and a mother so bad."

"Oh, but I don't want a little boy, dear. I just want one little girl to make it seem as though my own Alice were living," answered the lady.

"Then I can't come," said Alice, "unless they make me go."

For a few moments the man and woman talked together and the man seemed to see in little Jeffrey all the things that other people had missed. He saw the honest blue eyes, the firm mouth and the manly walk, and he saw years ahead when the same little boy might be his partner in business. Then he said to Jeffrey:

"We want a son, as well as a daughter. So we will take you home and give you a happy New Year."

"New Year's is the lucky day, isn't it?" answered Jeffrey, beaming into the faces of his new parents. And the smile won the lady's heart and she took him as gladly as she did Alice.

So Jeffrey found his father and mother and home and a sister all on a happy New Year's day.—Farmers' Review.